

REMARKS

Claims 5-11 remain in this application, while claims 1-4 were previously canceled. Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Reconsideration of the objection set forth in section 1 on page 2 of the Office Action is in order. The document identified as "Specification," submitted on March 17, 2006 (see attached Bibliographic Data index appended to this Reply), does not directly reference claims and includes appropriate headings.

Independent claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), along with dependent claims 6-11, as unpatentable over U.S. Patent 5,722,300 to Burkhard et al. Reconsideration is requested.

Claim 5 above defines the vehicle steering column forming the subject matter of the invention as including a sliding bush with pocketlike depressions, spaced from each other in an axial direction, that run radially around an outer surface of the sliding bush, and reinforcing ribs provided between the depressions. It is respectfully submitted that nothing noted by the Examiner suggests modifying the Burkhard et al. steering column to include a sliding bush as now required by claim 5. While the comments set forth by the Examiner on page 8 of the Office Action are noted, providing two depressions spaced in axial direction as recited in claim 5 is not a "mere duplication of parts." The Burkhard et al. sliding bush of Burkhard carries hooks 70A, 70B, which resiliently snap into respective slots in an outer element or outer steering column. These hooks are provided to hold the bush in a desired position. The depression defined by lip 72 extends over nearly the entire length of the bush and fixes the bush nearly

over its total length to the outer element after liquid plastic is injected into the depression.

One advantage of the present invention is that the bush does not need additional holding members such as hooks. This advantage is achieved by providing two depressions spaced from each other in axial direction. If these depressions are filled with plastic, a good anchorage between the sliding bush and the outer steering column is achieved at both ends (this is evident from Figure 1 of the application) without the need to provide further mounting parts. This makes the bush simple and cheap. The bush can be fixed in a position in which its longitudinal axis corresponds to the longitudinal axis of the outer and inner steering columns. Additionally, the volume of the depression according to the Burkhard et al. configuration, which is defined by a single lip 72, depends largely on the axial length of the bush. A great deal of liquid plastic is needed to fix a long bush on the outer steering column, but long bushes are sometimes needed to provide the inner steering column sufficient guidance.

The present invention incorporates two depressions at axial ends of the bush so that the two depressions do not cover the total length of the bush. This reduces the volume of liquid plastic needed for injection molding as compared to the Burkhard et al. arrangement. The ribs between the depressions, moreover, give the sliding bush stability. One of ordinary skill in the art would not consider providing such ribs in the Burkhard et al. bushing, since nearly the complete outer surface of that bushing is used as a depression defined by lip 72, and thus filled with plastic, so that the Burkhard et al. bushing is fixed to the

outer steering column over nearly its total length. The present invention offers a different solution; only two smaller depressions are provided to be filled with plastic during injection molding to fix the bush at its respective ends with the outer steering column. In order to give this bush a good stability over its total length, ribs are incorporated between those two depressions. By providing a sliding bush having two depressions at the axial ends of the bush with reinforcing ribs between them, a superior fixed connection between the bush and the outer steering column is achieved. At the same time, the volume of plastic material for injection molding is reduced, and, thus, a simple, cheap, and stable arrangement is obtained.

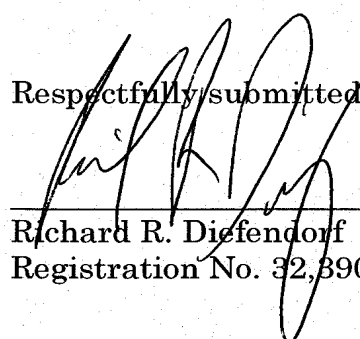
It is respectfully submitted that the Burkhard et al. patent disclosure does not suggest a vehicle steering column including a sliding bush with pocketlike depressions, spaced from each other in an axial direction, that run radially around an outer surface of the sliding bush, and reinforcing ribs provided between the depressions as claim 5 now defines, and that claim 5 above is patentable. The rest of the claims in this application depend on claim 5 and are considered patentable as well.

This application should now be in allowable condition. If there are any questions regarding this Reply or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an extension of time sufficient to effect a timely response. Please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.57488US).

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Respectfully submitted,



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Bibliographic Data

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04-16-2008	CTNF	Non-Final Rejection	PROSECUTION	1
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